

Replacement Sheets

In the specification:

Page 1, line 2, add the following new paragraph:

This application is a divisional of pending Serial No. 09/627,612 filed July 28, 2000.

Page 5, 8 lines from the bottom:

Figures 1(A), (B) and (C)

schematic illustrations of the effect of a crosslinking agent according to this invention,

In the claims:

7. (Amended) A gel solution comprising an ionotropic gel and a crosslinking agent comprising a carrier substance and counterions releasably bound to said carrier substance.

8. (Amended) A powder composition comprising a dried, uncrosslinked ionotropic gel and a dried crosslinking agent comprising a carrier substance and counterions releasably bound to said carrier substance.

9. (Amended) A method of crosslinking ionotropic gels with a crosslinking agent comprising a carrier substance and counterions releasably bound to said carrier substance with the steps:

- providing a mixture of the gel molecule to be crosslinked and the crosslinking agent,
- forming a layered body or a volume-molded body of the mixture, and
- crosslinking the gel molecules by the external influence of a substance, temperature or radiation, which causes the counterions to be released from the carrier substance.

10. (Amended) The method according to claim 9, whereby the first step of providing said mixture comprises providing an aqueous solution of the gel molecules to be crosslinked and adding